



Conference on the **Future** of **Europe**

SUMMARY RECORD

Working Group on 'Health', Chaired by Mr Maroš Šefčovič, Vice-President, European Commission

Friday 17 December 2021, 16:00 to 18:00

1. Introductory remarks of the Chair

This second meeting of the Working Group was held in remote format. The Chair, Mr Maroš Šefčovič, welcomed members and shared introductory remarks explaining that although the December plenary could not take place, the nine working groups meetings were taking place. He announced that the spokesperson of the working group had been selected among the representatives of the European Citizens' Panels. The Chair informed the members about the latest state of play of the Conference, mentioning in particular session 3 of panel 2 on "European democracy/values and rights, rule of law, security" that just took place in Florence and where citizens adopted 39 recommendations. All the recommendations can be consulted [on the Platform](#). The Chair invited citizens to inform the working group on the health issues discussed during the 2nd session of European Citizens' Panel 3 on "Climate change, environment / health" and recalled how the orientations from the 2nd session of the Panel will be narrowed down to a more limited number of recommendations during the 3rd session. He reminded that the third session will take place in Natolin on 7-9 January.

The members of the working group, starting with the citizens' panels' representatives, were then invited to take the floor.

2. Discussion

The spokesperson gave an introduction about the state of play of deliberations of Panel 3 and presented the outcome of the second session of Panel 3 that took place online on 19-21 November. He underlined the unprecedented character of this project and emphasised his satisfaction of being part of it. Panel 3 formulated 242 orientations during its second session. He mentioned in particular orientations on equal access, investment in health, the use of antibiotics for human and animal health, the use of pesticides in agriculture, the promotion of healthy habits. He explained that Panel 3 was in the middle of the process and that orientations will become recommendations in the third and last session of the Panel.

Discussions concentrated around the following topics:

- Some members said that the EU has been built on social values and universal coverage and that EU citizens should be granted equal access to healthcare services of high quality, using the latest technologies.

- Some speakers underlined the importance to strengthen Member States' cooperation. A member stressed the need to respect Member states' diversity and said that current Treaty provisions should be fully exploited first before proposing Treaty changes. Another speaker added that we should speak about coordination of healthcare systems and not about the integration of EU health care systems in order to take into account the subsidiarity principle. Some others called to strengthen EU competences and investment in health.
- Some speakers considered that Member states should strengthen their cooperation, building on the European Reference Networks (ERNs) in order to exchange knowledge and expertise. Member states should also invest in common infrastructure for highly specialised healthcare and develop a joint approach on research instruments.
- Other members stressed that the COVID-19 pandemic had shown the need to improve cooperation, to increase the resilience of healthcare systems, to increase production capacity in the EU and to reduce our dependencies on supply chains. The importance of strategic stockpiling and of cross-border coordination, notably between hospitals, was also mentioned. It was also underlined that regional and local authorities should be involved in the management of health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
- A member underlined that people with disabilities face additional barriers when exercising their right to health, notably barriers to healthcare, medicinal products and medical devices, but also structural discrimination. Disabilities should not be seen from the medical perspective only but also from the human rights perspective as foreseen in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (art.25 on health) ratified by the EU. The member added that very few Member states have legislation against discrimination against disabilities on the ground of health and that the anti-discrimination directive was blocked within the Council. Another member underlined the role social economy enterprises can play for the integration of disadvantaged people.
- The interdependence between health and healthy food production and between health and the environment was raised, especially the strong connection regarding food production and availability of food nucleus products that is complex and deserves further discussion.
- Others indicated that digitalisation, artificial intelligence and robotics are also very important in healthcare systems. The EU could provide the backbone for digital infrastructure, which is required for critical research investments and for cross-border cooperation in digital transformation and innovative solutions. In the context of the "Horizon Europe" programme, efforts should focus on telemedicine and innovative research, application of new technologies such as augmented reality, robotics, medical imaging and other digital solutions.
- Some speakers said that several strands of Panel 3 deserved specific attention, i.e. promotion of healthy lifestyles, prevention of diseases and equal access to health for all. These strands have also an important economic and social impact in the EU with respect to demographics. Coordinating innovation in health research should be a priority considering the demographic ageing in the EU. Some indicated that demographic policies should become a horizontal priority for all European policies.

- Some others called for a better platform for sharing information about health and for joint information campaigns to encourage vaccination and fight against disinformation.
- A member referred to the EP Special Committee on Beating Cancer. Its recommendations call for stronger EU action against cancer and will be voted at the EP plenary in January.
- In the context of shortages of medicines, a speaker suggested that the EU should set up a European institute to manufacture off-patent drugs and supply hospitals in Europe in order to ensure access for all to medicines. The same speaker said that the EU should intervene on the price of medicines, taking into account public research investments.
- Some members asked to further structure the Working Group discussions and asked how to discuss the proposals from the civil society. The Chair advised to circulate written contributions via the multilingual digital platform and to present them orally at the working group meetings.

3. Concluding remarks of the Chair

Concluding the meeting, the Chair thanked all members for their contributions and summarised the interventions and suggestions made. He explained the process that will lead to the adoption of recommendations in session 3 of Panel 3 in Natolin on 7-9 January. He added that the Panel's recommendations will be discussed at the next Working Group meeting at the Conference plenary on 21 January.

ANNEX: List of members of the Working Group on Health**CoFE Plenary Working Group on Health (48)**

Chair: Maroš ŠEFČOVIČ (European Commission)

Title	First name	Last name	Component
Mr	Pascal	ARIMONT	European Parliament
Mr	Andrei	BACIU	Council
Ms	Alina	BÂRGĂOANU	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Katerina	BAT'HOVÁ	Council
Ms	Linette Eleni	BLANKENSTEINER	European citizens panels
Ms	Claudette	BUTTIGIEG	National Parliaments
Ms	Anda	ČAKŠA	National Parliaments
Ms	Susanna	CECCARDI	European Parliament
Mr	Roberto	CIAMBETTI	Committee of the Regions
Mr	Alain	COHEUR	European Economic and Social Committee
Ms	Nathalie	COLIN-OESTERLÉ	European Parliament
Ms	Margarita	DE LA PISA CARRIÓN	European Parliament
Ms	Isabel	DÍAZ AYUSO	Committee of the Regions
Ms	Katarzyna	DRAŹEK- LASKOWSKA	Council
Ms	Ines	GASMI	European citizens panels
Ms	Camille	GIRARD	European citizens panels
Mr	Ilenia Carmela	GRECO	European citizens panels
Mr	Sebastián	GUILLEN	European citizens panels
Ms	Kinga	JOÓ	National citizens panels/events
Ms	Olga	KALAKOUTA	Council
Ms	Boudraa	MAGHNIA LINDA (MOUSTAKIM)	European citizens panels
Ms	Radka	MAXOVÁ	European Parliament
Ms	Rūta	MILIŪTĒ	National Parliaments
Mr	Alin Cristian	MITUȚA	European Parliament
Ms	Dolors	MONTSERRAT	European Parliament
Mr	Nicolas	MORAVEK	European citizens panels
Mr	Renaud	MUSELIER	Local/Regional representative
Ms	Ria	OOMEN-RUIJTEN	National Parliaments
Mr	Dimitrios	PAPADIMOULIS	European Parliament
Ms	Troels de Leon	PETERSEN	European citizens panels
Mr	Mark	PLEŠKO	National citizens panels/events
Mr	Jean-François	RAPIN	National Parliaments
Mr	Ivo	RASO	European citizens panels

Ms	Michèle	RIVASI	European Parliament
Ms	Valeria	RONZITTI	Social Partners
Ms	Christa	SCHWENG	European Economic and Social Committee
Mr	Maroš	ŠEFČOVIČ	European Commission
Ms	Elisaveta	SIMEONOVA	Council
Mr	Ivan Vilibor	SINČIĆ	European Parliament
Ms	Niamh	SMYTH	National Parliaments
Ms	Paola	TAVERNA	National Parliaments
Mr	Jesús	TERUEL TERUEL	European citizens panels
Mr	Zoltán	TESSELY	National Parliaments
Ms	Patrizia	TOIA	European Parliament
Ms	Kathleen	VAN BREMPT	European Parliament
Mr	Ioannis	VARDAKASTANIS	Civil Society
Ms	Anna	VIKSTRÖM	National Parliaments
Mr	Claude	WISELER	National Parliaments